

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 IO-14 SAB-01 SAM-01 DRC-01 /109 W

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TO USIA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7809

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USIAC

USIA FOR IAA, IOP/MR, IPS/PA

STATE FOR AF/C

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: ZAIRE REACTION TO MAALOT INCIDENT

REF: AF 50 - WF MAY 16, 1974

1. SINCE ZAIRE SWITCH FROM ISRAELI TO ARAB SIDE LAST OCTOBER, ZAIRE REPORTING FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS IN MIDEAST HAS FOLLOWED CONSISTENT PATTERN: DOWNPLAY TERRORIST ACT, REPORT ISRAELI RETALIATION AND CONDEMN LATTER AS CONTRIBUTING TO SPIRALING VIOLENCE IN MIDEAST.

2. REPORTING OF MAALOT INCIDENT INDICATES NO CHANGE IN PATTERN. ZAIRE NEWS AGENCY (AZAP), WHICH ORGANIZATIONALLY IS LOCATED UNDER THE PRESIDENCY, REACTED BY CARRYING AFP CLIPS IN BULLETIN OF MAY 18. COVERAGE OF INCIDENT IN DAILY NEWSPAPERS CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT.

3. AZAP QUOTES NAYEF HAWATMEHN, SEC. GEN. OF POPULAR UNCLASSIFIED

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DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE, AS

SAYING THAT "THE OPERATION AT MAALOT HAD AS ITS GOAL TO DEMONSTRATE THE REJECTION BY THE PALESTINIANS OF THE ENDEAVORS INITIATED BY HENRY KISSINGER TO LIQUIDATE THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE."

4. ALSO ACCORDING TO HAWATMEHN, IT WAS "THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BLOODY BY-PRODUCT OF THE OPERATION."

5. ALTHOUGH THE DEATH TOLL IS QUOTED, NO ATTEMPT AT CLARIFICATION IS INCLUDED.

6. IN SEPARATE BUT RELATED AFP STORY, AZAP QUOTES FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL, JEAN HERLY, AS "DEPLORING A MISUNDERSTANDING" OVER THE "PASSWORD" WHICH, ACCORDING TO AZAP HEADLINE, "RESULTED IN THE TRAGEDY AT MAALOT".

7. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, HERLY "SUGGESTED ESTABLISHING DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE PALESTINIANS, BUT THE (ISRAELI LIASON) OFFICER CONVINCED ME THAT SUCH AN INITIATIVE WAS NOT ADVISABLE. AT THAT MOMENT, SHOTS AND EXPLOSIONS BEGAN."

8. "WHEN ASKED IF, IN HIS OPINION, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAD TRIED, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, TO DELAY HIS ARRIVAL AT MAALOT, THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR ANSWERED: "I DO NOT THINK THEY TRIED TO DELAY ME. I AM SURE THAT JERUSALEM DID ALL IT COULD, BUT I STILL ASK MYSELF WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE IN ANOTHER FIVE OR SIX HOURS THAT HAD NOT BEEN (DONE)..."
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